

## Poetry.

### WELL DONE.

I love, in the summer evening,  
 When the work of the day is done,  
 To sit alone in the gloaming;  
 There precious memory come  
 With the fragrant breath of clover  
 That blooms in the fields in June;  
 When the reapers return from gleaning,  
 In the light of the harvest moon.

Then comes once more the memory  
 Of a golden field of grain,  
 That I garnered with my father  
 Near the orchard by the lane,  
 While the boys were in the army,  
 And we were left alone  
 To gather in the harvest,  
 And do the work at home.

Again, I hear him kindly saying,  
 When that field of grain was done,  
 As he placed his hand upon me,  
 "Kinney, you've done well, my son."  
 Now, I'm gleaning in life's harvest,  
 The precious souls of men,  
 And hoping to hear in heaven  
 My Father's words, "Well done."

—W. M. Gard.

## Contributions.

### THE GREAT NEED OF THE BRETHREN CHURCH.

B. C. MOOMAW.

It is with some reluctance that I accede to the Editor's request for a contribution to this symposium. The subject assigned is a direct contradiction to that conservatism, always present in the church, and perhaps more or less salutary, that the church "has need of nothing." Is not her doctrine rounded and complete? Will you add anything thereto, or subtract anything therefrom? Is not her polity dictated by God's Word, even as some affirm in every minute detail? Is not every wheel, and joint, and band of the machinery of administration appointed beforehand, leaving nothing to be thought out, or set in order? Manifestly the inquiry must not trespass upon any of this holy ground. Here it is not our privilege to think; only to believe and do.

It is not to be denied that within the limits of the authoritative Word, this doctrine is true. It is not our privilege to modify or adapt it, so as to make it harmonize, according to our estimate of things, with modern needs, modern modes of thought, or changed conditions. Some even go so far as to say that it is not our privilege to interpret it. Interpretations differ, and who is to say, therefore, which is the right one? Whose dictum theologicum shall be law?

Battles long and fierce have been waged around the proposition that the MEANING

of the Word is the Word. Literalists deny it fiercely. Liberalists affirm it with equal ardor. Perhaps neither are more than half right.

These reflections have sufficient relevancy to the subject to justify the space they occupy. The Brethren church has needs, great and small. To have needs and to be sensible of those needs is a condition which has in it an element of great hopefulness. We may even say that it is a normal and necessary condition. How can God bless those who need nothing? I believe that we will have needs in eternity. I believe that we will forever be satisfying urgent demands of our spiritual nature by drinking at the inexhaustible fountain of God's fulness. Here we need to have our imperfections diminished. There we will need to have our perfections increased and enlarged.

The imperfections of the aggregate differ little from the imperfections of the units of which it is composed. The Brethren church was a protest against certain errors of the German Baptist church from which it sprang. It is the verdict of history that religious revulsions have a tendency to opposite extremes. The Brethren church cannot wholly claim exception. From intense episcopacy we swung over to the most liberal congregationalism. The secession struck a tremendous blow at organic union by making as many churches as there were congregations, with a minimum degree of adhesion between them. Instead of "The Church," we had "The Churches."

The New Testament has both.

In this matter as in most others I apprehend that the truth is to be found between the two extremes.

Consistency as well as conviction leads me to say that perhaps the greatest need of the Brethren church to-day is organization. Our position among the sects is, and for several generations to come will continue to be polemical. In doctrine we are peculiar and distinctive. All the great schools of doctrinal teaching strenuously deny our claims. We are arrayed not only against the unregenerate world, but against the theological world as well. We are few and they are many. We are weak and they are mighty. We are practically disorganized, and they are thoroughly organized. How can we hope to win this battle; how can we expect to escape annihilation and oblivion if we fight in loose and disjointed detachments?

The very fact of our weakness in numbers, as well as the comparative ineffectuality of our influence in the world, makes it necessary that we be organized with the compactness of a Macedonian phalanx.

Everything which we are accustomed to regard as needs of the church will find their answer and their antidote in organization. Of course organization will not supply grace. Neither will the lack of it. But organization is common sense, and common sense is the next thing to grace. It is unnecessary to say what everybody already knows. It is unnecessary to fill a column with statements and proofs that we need more of the Holy Spirit, more love, etc. Who doesn't know these things? But these blessings we need as individuals, and not until we possess them as individuals will the unction be manifest in the church.

Thorough organization will give us schools, missions, literature, and all those material agencies so necessary to the up-building of the church. See what it has done in these respects for the German Baptists. In these great departments of church activity they have out-progressed the Progressives. Their history during the last ten or fifteen years is marvelous. The German is proverbially parsimonious as well as proverbially conservative. His conservatism has its roots in his parsimony. It saves expenditure. It fences him in against demands for money. Missions, schools, books, tracts, and papers are expensive, therefore every excuse is eagerly sought which will justify indifference or hostility to these causes. Summerfield said that it was as painful to get money from a German as to squeeze blood from his fingers. Nevertheless we have witnessed a marvelous expansion among the German Baptists, involving the expenditure of perhaps several hundred thousand dollars, all of which has apparently been cheerfully supplied. Of course the volume of work done doesn't compare with what other denominations do, in proportion to numbers and wealth, but for the German Baptist Brethren, with their record for extreme conservatism, it is little less than miraculous.

Without their compact organization it is safe to say that little or none of this work would have been accomplished.

Organization gives the sense of power, the sense of power awakens enthusiasm, and enthusiasm opens the purse strings. Without enthusiasm you may perhaps compel a little dribbling stream of contributions to church causes, but a mouse could drink it all up. It is necessary to rouse the dormant soul. The cold sense of duty must be warmed and reinforced by the electric energy of zeal, else the "hidden treasures of darkness" will never see the light. This is not as it should be, but it is as it is.

Lest I be misunderstood in what I intend to say further, let me assure every-